

Franses's treatment of Byzantine views of the afterlife may be the core of his book, but it is only incidental to his main purpose, which is to elucidate the Byzantine donor portrait. But his presentation of the portrait as a means of influencing the donor's posthumous destiny requires a view of the afterlife that was full of terrors and perils rather than one overseen by a merciful God, as official teaching suggested. Franses therefore emphasises the importance of the alternative narrative, which provided what he was looking for. He becomes impatient not only with the Byzantine theologians for turning a blind eye to the inconsistencies that existed in their concept of the afterlife, but also with modern commentators for taking at face value 'first-hand reports and explanations of beliefs', which were designed – not necessarily consciously – to mislead as a way of masking blatant inconsistencies. The author is working within a framework provided by the concept of 'misrecognition', whereby misrepresentation or suppression of inconvenient facts and ideas springs from the need not so much to deceive others, as oneself, and serves as a way of preserving the integrity of belief when its different strands come into conflict. This is an idea developed by the influential social scientist Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002), whose work provides much of the intellectual underpinning of Franses's book. At first sight, it applies rather well to the differing versions that the Byzantines apparently entertained of the afterlife. The difficulty is that the Byzantines themselves approached the matter rather differently. Take the Orthodox Patriarch Germanos II (1223–40), who was a contemporary of the first debate between the Latin and Orthodox Churches over purgatory. He was not directly involved, but he will certainly have received a report on it. His hair-raising account of the perils of the afterlife – replete with tollgates and demons of the upper air – alerts us to the fact that the highest ranks of the hierarchy subscribed to the alternative narrative of the afterlife and did not see it as in direct opposition to official teaching. Stress on the perils of the afterlife only emphasised the necessity of the wisdom and mercy of God. Rather than two different concepts of the afterlife being in contradiction they reinforced each other. It is an illustration of how differently the Latins and the Greeks framed the problem of the afterlife. The former solved it, as the author notes, by creating a mechanistic system of absolution, which 'cut out aspects of true forgiveness and charity of God'. To the Byzantines this was nothing less than 'an infringement or usurpation of divine mercy and divine power' (p. 124), which their views on the afterlife preserved. Not only is this – despite earlier criticism – a sympathetic treatment of the Orthodox position, but by approaching the problem from a new direction the author forces us to look afresh at an old and increasingly stale debate, which has depths that until he drew our attention to them were ignored.

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Religious practices and everyday life in the long fifteenth century (1350–1570). Interpreting changes and changes of interpretation. Edited by Ian Johnson and Ana Maria S. A. Rodrigues. (New Communities of Interpretation, 2.) Pp. 418 incl. 25 ills. Turnhout: Brepols, 2021. €110. 978 2 503 59355 5
JEH (75) 2024; doi:10.1017/S0022046923001471

This volume of essays originated in an international colloquium held in Lisbon in 2016, which was designed not only to reopen discussion of the issue of continuity

and change between the late medieval and early modern period, but also to engage with the myriad national narratives about these events. The aim to provide a series of studies that can either offer interpretations of change or changes of interpretation over this long period is welcome. It offers the opportunity to rethink broad conceptual issues such as continuities between medieval and early modern movements for reform, and, as the editors noted, engage with interpretative paradigms such as confessionalisation. The volume is also important because it showcases the work of scholars from across Europe, including those from regions such as Lithuania, Hungary and Portugal that are often underrepresented in Anglophone scholarship. Drawing on this expertise, the volume is able to provide an unusually rich selection of case studies, perspectives and approaches that demonstrate not only the transmission of religious ideas and practices, but how they were adapted to suit local circumstances.

The volume is divided into four sections. The first two offer essays concerned with religious practices and daily life among the regular clergy and the laity, respectively. The essays in the first section discuss a range of religious orders in differing regions including the Canons Regular of St Augustine, a comparative study of Catalan Poor Clares and English Brigittines, and Portuguese female Dominicans. Those in the second consider a diverse range of subjects including changing attitudes towards prayer beads in Italy and central Europe, prayer books in post-Hussite Bohemia, the efforts of Reginald Pecock, a fifteenth-century bishop of Chichester, to recall Lollards to orthodoxy, and the connections between the Reformation and the increased importance of the Lithuanian language. The third section takes up the theme of death and the afterlife, providing essays that trace developments in the *ars moriendi* literature of the fifteenth century, Caxton's role in the popularisation of this tradition in England, a *momento mori* tradition in Bohemian art and the emperor Charles v's efforts to prepare for his death. The final section offers essays that variously examine crypto-Christianity in the sixteenth-century Balkans, discuss how older religious practices could continue to run in parallel with Reformed ones in sixteenth-century Szepes (modern day Spiš, Slovakia), and discuss what is revealed about religious practices in Southern Hungary by an analysis of supplications to Rome in the period up to 1526. The volume is concluded by an essay by Géraldine Veyseyre reflecting on the themes of the essays and what they have revealed.

While the individual essays in this volume offer important contributions to our knowledge of religious practices in this extended period, their individual historiographical significance and their collective contribution is, perhaps, underdeveloped. It is not always clear how the essays in the volume address the key themes of continuity and change. Many of the essays do this very effectively. For example, Jooste Robbe's account of the *ars moriendi* covers a *longue durée*, while other essays compare two case studies drawn from distinct periods to demonstrate change over time. Others, such as Monika Saczyńska-Vercarmer and Erminia Ardissino's complementary, incisive discussions of the development of the use of rosary beads in late medieval and early modern Central Europe and Italy, share substantive thematic links that allow for effective comparison between individual cases. This was not always the case, however. Several of the other essays offer thoughtful, detailed, albeit temporally and geographically circumscribed case

studies. They therefore provide a series of snapshots of particular religious practices at precise moments in time rather than a sense of how they developed or changed. Furthermore, the sheer diversity of materials studied, although one of the strengths of the volume, in this context sometimes serves to hamper meaningful comparison between the contributions. Equally, a commitment to altering the perspectives from which the materials are examined would seem to require the articulation of the existing historiographical framework in order fully to comprehend the significance of the new approach presented. This was made more relevant by the intention to engage with national historical discourses, especially those with which readers may be unfamiliar. Frequently, the reader is required to infer the significance of an individual case study and the methods adopted in its analysis, rather than being presented with a clear indication of the individual author's appreciation of their contribution.

The relative lack of explicit historiographical engagement in the individual essays reflects a wider issue in the framing of the volume as a whole. The ambition to compile a collection of essays that covers such a long period is admirable, but the concept of a 'long fifteenth century' (one that covers a period of two hundred and twenty years) and its historiographical and methodological significance could have been explored at greater length. While this periodisation has the effect of de-centring the Reformation in accounts of the transition from a late medieval to an early modern period, thereby allowing continuities and developments within religious practice to come to the fore, the editors' conception of its significance is relatively underdeveloped. I would have welcomed further, overt historiographical reflection, for instance discussion of Hubert Jedin's concept of a Catholic Reformation, to explain why they hold the fifteenth century to be the pivotal century in this reimagined periodisation. This may have explained why they believed that this century needs to be placed within the context of fourteenth-century developments and why the effects of changes that occurred during this period continued to resonate until the later years of the sixteenth.

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The crusade of 1456. Texts and documentation in translation. By James D. Mixson.

Pp. xviii + 306 incl. 3 maps. Toronto–London: University of Toronto Press, 2022. \$42.95 (paper). 978 1 4875 2393 0

JEH (75) 2024; doi:10.1017/S0022046923001550

The present volume is certainly a very important contribution, which will be useful to scholars, students and everyone interested in history. To my knowledge, it is the first collection of translated sources related to the anti-Ottoman crusade of 1456 which followed papal calls after the fall of Constantinople and ended up with the defeat of the Ottoman attempt to capture Belgrade: an army led by John Hunyadi, captain general of Hungary, and John of Capistrano, a Franciscan friar and the most prominent preacher of this crusade, lifted the siege of the city. This was probably the crucial and the most successful anti-Ottoman crusading campaign, which manifestly lacks modern source editions and source translations.

The book provides a good framework for those not yet familiar with the history of the crusade of 1456: an introduction with an overview of the main events of the